

# The Best Verse of the Week

## Spring Poems as to Season Though Not Always as to the Theme

### The Arcady of an Infantryman

By Private Charles Divine.

I've walked so many winding roads  
I love no more the straight.  
I want a highway dipped in trees,  
A little house, a gate.

A gate to lean upon and look  
Back where I came along,  
And, dreaming—yes, a little brook  
To set my dreams to song.

A gate to watch the sunsets from,  
And hear the winds go by,  
And breathe the lilacs after rain—  
And, possibly, a sigh.

A gate to grip with friendly hands  
When stars are overhead,  
And feel it move, as if to say:  
"You'd better go to bed."

### The Poets

By Scudder Middleton.

We need you now, strong guardians of our hearts,  
Now, when a darkness lies on sea and land,  
When we of weakening faith forget our parts  
And bow before the falling of the sand.  
Be with us now or we betray our trust,  
And say, "There is no wisdom but in death"—  
Remembering lovely eyes now closed with dust—  
"There is no beauty that outlasts the breath."  
For we are growing blind and cannot see  
Beyond the clouds that stand like prison bars,  
The changeless regions of our empery,  
Where once we moved in friendship with the stars.  
O children of the light, now in our grief  
Give us again the solace of belief.

From *Contemporary Verse*.

### Woolworth Tower at Dawn

By Brian Padraic O'Seasain.

In the dim half light of an early dawn  
I came across the wide and empty square  
That fronts the City Hall, and all at once  
The splendor of that shining tower loomed close  
As spire on spire it soared to pierce the clouds.  
It stood there all agleam and tipt with gold,  
Filling the dun square with a fairy gleam;  
It made me think of a tall hauntness strayed  
With sweet untiring limbs to alien shores,  
Her very presence showing by its grace  
The boorishness around that shames her face.

I stopped and stared at the transfigured stone,  
The Tower and I in a void world alone—  
The great half-conscious vision of our race  
There lived and glowed amid the commonplace—  
Leaving memorial steel to mark the birth  
Of deathless beauty springing from the earth.  
I gazed, then slowly passed down to the sea,  
Heartened anew by some high ministry  
Within that soaring Tower that like a shrine  
In a dark wood prefigures the divine.

From *Star Drift. The Four Seas Company*.

### War

By Sherwood Anderson.

Long lanes of fire, dead cornstalks burning,  
Run now—head downward—plunging and crying,  
Hold hard the breath now,  
Forward we run.

Out of Nebraska, on into Kansas, now the word runs,  
Runs with the wind, runs with the news of war, crying  
and screaming.  
Now the word runs.

Out on low ridges, black 'gainst the night sky;  
Farmer boys running, factory boys running;  
Boys from Ohio  
And my Illinois.

Questions and answers, over the land,  
Questions that hurt, answers that hurt,  
Questions of courage  
That cannot but hurt.  
Deep in the cornfields the gods come to life,  
Gods that have waited, gods that we know not.  
Gods come to life  
In America now.

From *Mid-American Chants. John Lane Company*.

### Down in Old Virginia

By Mary B. Ehrmann.

Down in old Virginia  
Where the rhododendrons bloom  
And the fragrant woods breathe ever forth  
A languorous perfume,—  
There it is that I would linger  
Where all Nature is atune;  
Down in old Virginia  
Where the rhododendrons bloom.

From *Melodies in Verse. Stewart & Kidd Company*.

### When Bugles Blow on the Campus

By Edward N. Teall.

Bright soldiers of the sun, the steady marching hours  
Retreating, bivouac in the West,  
And "up and over" swarm the minions of the powers  
Of darkness. Sweetly from old Princeton's guardian  
towers  
Bells bid the battle rest.

The long day's drills are done, the manual of arms  
Is laid aside a little while,  
With sketch books plotted full of village streets, and  
farms;

The weary lads retire to dream of war's alarms,  
Or dream of home, and smile.

What weaving spell, soft borne upon the vesper breeze,  
Now floods, a music-minute's lapse,  
The cloistered close of Academe with melodies  
Plaintively sweet, as though a harp hung in the trees?  
Strange campus music: Taps!

Now wrapt about with soft investiture of night,  
The campus gives itself to dreams  
Wherein the shadow peopled years retrace their flight,  
As phantom argosies, in the shivery moon's dim sight,  
Drop down historic streams.

The sentinel elms with purpling shadows paint the  
sword,

Save where the moon rays, breaking through,  
Night's fingers phosphor tipped, gild the old gun that  
roared

At Stony Brook when freemen-battled for the Lord  
Within these old halls' view.

Old North draws close her cloak of ivied memories—  
Each tendril binds to her a life—  
And measuring the long hours with mother reveries  
Waits for the steps of her returning sons when these  
Thinned ranks come home from strife.

Nightlong, beneath the warm arch of the God-filled skies,  
Lit by the selfsame stars that shone  
Upon her brave American brood when battle dyes  
Incarnadined her ancient soil, her prayers arise  
For sons not hers alone.

The night winds whisper in the ivy of her walls  
(Each leaf a strong man's vow  
Of loyalty); and over her and all her halls  
The sense of peace transcending knowledge falls,  
Faith's chrism on her brow.

O Nassau Hall! Thou rock of faith, firm citadel  
Of learning armed for life! With rods  
Of love we smite thy stone and, more than Israel  
Of old, drink knowledge, as the living streams forth well,  
Our cause, and thine—is God's!

From *the Princeton Alumni Weekly*.

### Woman's Love

By Lucy Buxton.

When you came with gleaming gold,  
Resonant of worth and fame,  
Showering treasures manifold,  
When you came,

Nought would make me change my name;  
If you deemed that love was sold,  
Mine the scorn and yours the shame!

Yet my heart had scarce been cold  
If, with halting words and lame,  
All your weakness you had told  
When you came.

From *Hay Harvest and Other Poems. John Lane Company*.

### The Root

By Edward F. Garesche.

In the dark and underground  
The gnarled and sturdy roots are found,  
Holding, feeding sturdily  
All the vigor of the tree.  
Grumble not that thou canst know  
Fame nor praise nor pride nor show.  
Glory, for the flower and fruit,  
To the dark, forgotten root!

From *the World and the Waters. The Queen's Work Press*.

### Prayer Before an Attack

By Woodbine Willie.

It ain't as I 'open 'E'll keep me safe  
While the other blokes goes down,  
It ain't as I wants to leave this world  
And wear an 'ero's crown.  
It ain't for that as I says my prayers  
When I goes to the attack,  
But I pray that whatever comes my way  
I may never turn me back.  
I leaves the matter o' life and death  
To the Father who knows what's best,  
And I prays that I still may play the man  
Whether I turns east or west.

From *Rough Rhymes of a Padre. George H. Doran Company*.

### Mother Goose on Goose Creek

By William Aspenwall Bradley.

Sing a song of sixpence,  
Pappy's in the pen,  
Mammy's riding up the creek  
To git him out agen.

Pappy drank some lickar,  
Killed a man named Brown.  
Now they say he's helping Doc,  
Down at Frankfort town.

Pappy'll git good manners,  
Larn to read an' write.  
Soon he'll run for county clerk.  
Won't that be a sight?

From *Singing Carr. Alfred A. Knopf*.

### The New Version

By Frank L. Stanton.

I mourn no more my children slain;  
Their Country takes them to her breast  
From some dread, star still battle plain,  
With unavailing swords at rest.  
Theirs was the sacrifice supreme;  
Dreaming they died for Freedom's dread.

The loneliness of Loss struck deep  
When, crying to them from afar,  
I felt the battle shadows creep  
And saw the storm veil Life's last star.  
But lo! a later Light appears,  
And shall I dim its gleam with tears?

I see, in visions of the Night,  
No world upon its cringing knees,  
But hosts of Liberty and Light,  
God guided o'er the thunder seas,  
Break Freedom's chains and prison bars—  
Uplift a banner, bright with stars.

I glimpse new glory in the strife;  
A song of swords thrills earth and sky;  
I see the dead lands leap to life  
And hear a new world battle cry!  
And Freedom's voice is in the guns;  
God lights the swords of Freedom's sons.

Oh! I could kneel and kiss this sod  
Where God's foes strangled Peace and Prayer  
And trampled on the Cross of God,  
Yet hailed the Christ as kinsman there!  
This sod that echoes Freedom's tread—  
Where Freedom shall avenge my dead!

O mother hearts I never knew—  
O Spartan mothers of the brave,  
These arms across the world to you—  
To clasp you for the sons you gave!  
Even all your great love had to give  
For freedom that a world might live!

From *the Atlanta Constitution*.

### Bird of the Night

By Benjamin de Casseres.

O thou pinioned Thought, where wilt thou wing me  
to-night?  
Dug from the marl and silt of my soul,  
Breath of my delicate dreams,  
Bird with the eye of the circular fires sucked from the  
suns we have grazed in our flight,  
Cleaver of lightnings, warbler in the zenith of my pas-  
sionate being,  
Plumed and feathered for thy mystic spiral progressions,  
Where wilt thou bear me this night?  
From *the Shadow-Eater. Wilmarth Publishing Com-  
pany*.

### Hugh Latimer

By Henry A. Beers.

His lips amid the flame outsent  
A music strong and sweet,  
Like some unearthly instrument  
That's played upon by heat.

As spice-wood tough, laid on the coal,  
Sets all its perfume free,  
The incense of his hardy soul  
Rose up exceedingly.

To open that great flower, too cold  
Where sun and vernal rain;  
But fire has forced it to unfold,  
Nor will it shut again.

From *the Two Twilights. Richard G. Badger*.

### The Journey

By David O'Neil.

The journey of life?  
It is but the stepping from the valley,  
That lies dark and dank in the mist,  
To the hill-top,  
Bright and clear in the sun.  
And for the journey,  
Be it one day or a thousand years,  
A knapsack filled with love.

From *a Cabinet of Jade. The Four Seas Company*.